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LARRY CRAIG

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NEWS RELEASE

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CRAIG URGES SENATE TO ‘GET SERIOUS’ ON MEDICARE PHYSICIAN PAY LEGISLATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. – In the wake of Thursday night’s defeat of H.R. 6331, the Medicare physician pay legislation, Idaho Senator Larry Craig today urged the U.S. Senate to get serious about correcting a Medicare physician pay cut set to take effect July 1 and crafting a consensus bill the President can sign.

H.R. 6331, which failed on a procedural vote June 26 would have canceled a 10.6 percent payment cut to physicians treating Medicare patients and increased Medicare payments to doctors in January by 1.1 percent. This bill was almost identical to legislation that the Senate had defeated two weeks ago. It died because the Democratic majority leadership refused to bring up compromise legislation that would have stopped the physician payment cuts without damaging the private plan options in Medicare and likely would have passed and been signed by the President before July 1.

Craig blamed partisan tensions for blocking a simple 30-day extension of current physician pay rates which would have spared doctors any cuts while Congress continued to work out a solution. “Still, we now have an opportunity to revisit physician pay under Medicare and work together on a fair outcome,” Craig said. “Any consensus bill must halt the 10.6 percent cut in reimbursements to doctors under Medicare, extend Medicare’s rural hospital provisions that are so important to Idaho, and extend the moratorium on outpatient therapy caps.”

Craig said it’s important that the changes are not paid for by severely eroding the current choices that seniors have through the Medicare Advantage Program.

“In the next few years, Congress and the Administration will be challenged to overhaul Medicare in a comprehensive fashion,” Craig said. “It’s important to preserve these private plan options to enhance choice and competition.”